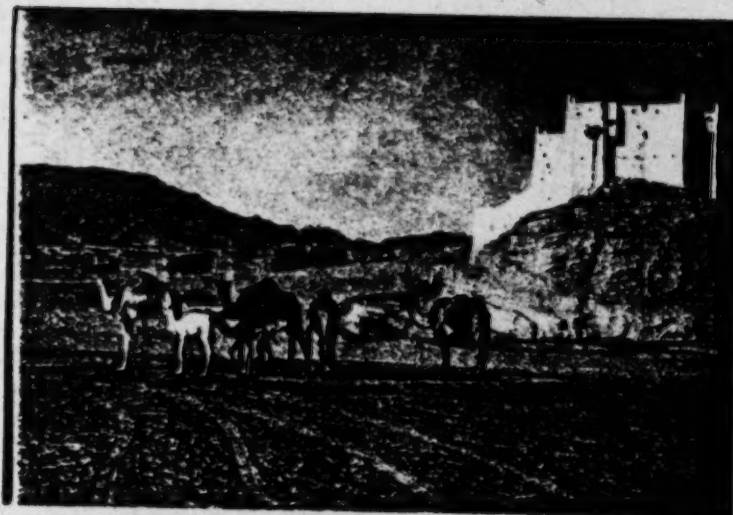


*Travels in the Protectorate*

local standards an elderly man, and rather infirm, mounted my, or rather his, donkey, and I a horse and we started to climb up the steep path which led to the town some thousand feet above us, all vestige of discipline vanished and things became chaotic. The tribesmen broke their ranks, swarmed round us and up the hill climbing from vantage point to vantage point to see us go by along the narrow winding path. My companions were hustled and complained of gross bad manners, to put it mildly; personally, I saw and heard nothing of the bad manners, but then I was close to the Sultan, and his immediate entourage were able to keep the inquisitive at a reasonable distance; besides, my attention was concentrated on my mount. I am not a good horseman, and surrounded by that blue clad mob I had quite an exciting ride up the narrow path which in places ran along a steep drop of several hundred feet. Near the top my horse became difficult, upset I have no doubt both by the crowd of excitable creatures pushing and shoving and my style of riding to which he was not accustomed. He began to advance crab fashion and to indulge in mild bucks, which I found disconcerting to say the least of it. Then he changed his tactics and turned sideways on the narrow path and stood on his hind legs and pawed with his forelegs in space. We both looked over the abyss. I dismounted—I thought it better to do so—and walked the rest of the way.

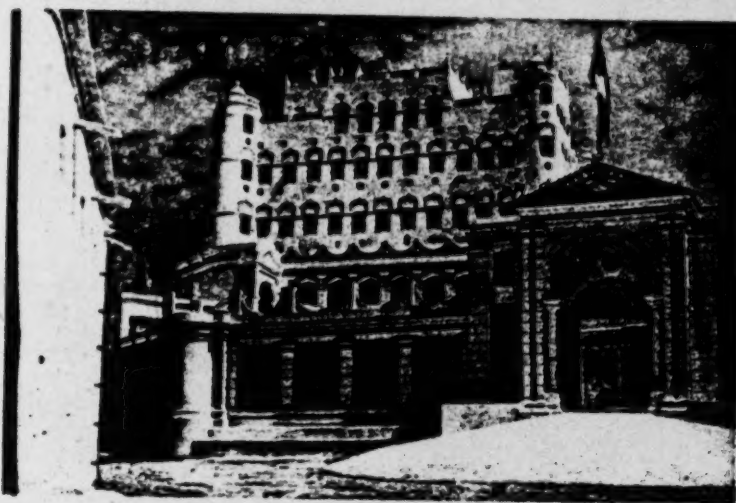
At the top we were accommodated in the Sultan's town house opposite the Mosque, while he occupied his new house on a spur of the hill outside the town where we were to lunch the next day. All afternoon the mass of tribesmen swarmed through the town, where they were fed by the Sultan, shouting and singing. It was not until nightfall that they dispersed back to their villages in the surrounding mountains, after having broken the water cistern at the Mosque and destroyed parts of the path up which we had climbed, making it impassable for the baggage animals. Whether the rougher elements were disappointed with their Ruler's hospitality, as some people said, or whether they were annoyed at the coming of "foreigners" to Al Qara as others maintained, I have no idea. It was probably six of one and half a dozen of the other, and

2: Hickinbotham, G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)  
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133

THE WELL BELOW A HADHRAMI BEDOON LEGION POST IN THE NORTHERN DESERT



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344

THE KATHINI SULTAN'S PALACE AT SAYUN

[facing p. 146]